

GETTING HEALTH TOGETHER

OUR STRATEGY

WHERE WE'RE GOING

OUR MISSION IS

...to play a leading role in making our community – including our patients, ourselves and the wider world – healthier.

OUR VISION IS

...a vibrant community in which the people are engaged, balanced, resilient, fulfilling their potential and cherishing one another and their world.

We're facing an enormous challenge. Despite the material wealth of our nation and the unprecedented investment in healthcare, demands on the National Health Service continue to outstrip resources and, by many measures, our society and our environment are declining. There are many and complex reasons for this, most of which are not addressed by providing technological solutions alone. It is for this reason that we use some of our influence and energy beyond and outside mainstream medical approaches.

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

We have a great team and each individual has a vital role to play. By working together we can achieve the objectives of the practice as a whole. Over the next five years we shall work even more closely to succeed in our mission.

We see the *interface* with our patients and the community as vital to all aspects of our work. First and foremost is the *reception team*. They do a very difficult job as first point of contact, sometimes with patients who are worried or distressed. Receptionists are in the frontline of the struggle to match demand with resources.

Consultations are the core clinical activity of the practice. The recognition that many professionals other than *doctors* have a vital role in front line healthcare has led us to use a shared approach in which the *nursing team* and other *therapists* have a chance to apply their own unique skills. This increases the challenge of good teamwork and communication.

Management and Administration is ever more difficult in the world of complex healthcare in which high workload, constant change, political imperatives and information overload can result in loss of clarity of purpose.

Crucially, we will work with others outside the practice, particularly our attached community staff, BANES Primary Care Trust, community and voluntary organisations, universities and government to be a catalyst for innovation and real improvement in the health of the community.

OUR OBJECTIVES

HOW WILL WE

Respond in a timely and efficient way to patients' requests for help?

We'll do this by

- fostering a practice team with mutual respect, trust and commitment
- leading by example and inspiration
- providing opening times that reflect a responsible balance between patient convenience and a practice team that is trim, healthy and enjoying their work
- operating the telephone system so that callers are connected within a reasonable time to someone who can help them
- ensuring that the receptionists try to understand and respond appropriately to every request for help
- providing an on-line information and response system via the practice website
- operating office systems that enable efficiency, making full use of information technology
- constantly re-examining our service in the light of feedback and outcomes.

HOW WILL WE

Respond to the needs of our patients and community in a holistic way?

We'll do this by

- considering every problem presented to us in an appropriately wide context
- understanding that illness is often a response to circumstances
- recognizing that patients and team are all unique individuals
- working with others who understand illness in diverse ways beyond mainstream medical thinking such as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners
- maintaining personal interests and reading that foster a wide experience and understanding of life
- working with other local groups in close contact with the community
- not allowing special interests to unbalance the wider view.

HOW WILL WE

Remain competent and up to date in mainstream medical care?

We'll do this by

- attending conferences and educational events either within or outside the practice
- reading about developments in healthcare
- maintaining a special interest in an aspect of healthcare so as to act as a resource for colleagues
- ensuring there are opportunities to discuss with colleagues informally
- engaging in regular formal appraisal.

HOW WILL WE

Care about people, about ourselves and about our environment?

We'll do this by

- understanding and respecting our own strengths and weaknesses and those of others
- cultivating humility
- reflecting kindly on our own performance and behaviour
- cultivating love and compassion for our fellow beings and the world we share
- seeking out beauty
- insisting on a work environment that reflects our values and beliefs about health and life.

HOW WILL WE

Promote health and prevent illness?

We'll do this by

- helping people to avoid behaviours that predispose to illness whilst being aware of our shared vulnerability
- nurturing and demonstrating personal responsibility for our health and our actions
- understanding that health comes from balance – striving and resting, competing and cooperating, material and spiritual wealth, work and play, risk and safety, pain and comfort
- helping us all to realize our mutual dependence and our need to engage with society
- understanding we are all part of the natural world and must work with its 'grain' and not against it
- offering technical disease prevention treatments such as immunisations, medications and screening tests
- work with parents, schools and other agencies involved with children to raise the profile of parenting skills
- working towards greater equality in society.

HOW WILL WE

Look forward and innovate?

We'll do this by

- recognizing there are no perfect solutions
- being ready to change and adapt to our vibrant world
- being involved in education of ourselves, our students and our colleagues
- questioning 'why' things are the way they are
- working closely with agencies involved in managing change, especially the Primary Care Trust, medical and academic institutions and government
- being prepared to stand alone in pursuit of our values if necessary
- being involved in research to expand knowledge and understanding.

HOW WILL WE FUND OUR VITAL WORK?

We'll do this by

- ensuring we qualify for the maximum core funding by fulfilling the government's performance targets (quality and outcomes framework) and other locally generated incentive payments
- attracting innovation funding from the Primary Care Trust
- providing advisory services to the Primary Care Trust and other health-related institutions
- providing clinical services to other service providers
- providing occupational health services to local employers
- attracting research project grants
- teaching undergraduates and postgraduates
- providing facilities for complementary and alternative practitioners
- seeking joint ventures with community organisations.

Whilst our core funding will always be through providing primary care services to the NHS based on list size, diversifying enables us to be less dependent on the vagaries of health care fashions and party politics, and it enables the provision of extra services not normally funded through conventional channels.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS?

We'll do this by

- regular monitoring of our activity statistics including prescribing, secondary care resource use and appointments offered and utilised
- patient direct feedback both positive and negative
- working with our patient liaison group
- undertaking an annual patient satisfaction survey
- regular subjective assessment by staff of the ease or difficulty in matching patient demand with resources
- annual performance according to the quality and outcomes framework
- annual staff appraisal as an opportunity for two way feedback.

HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

We recognize that to succeed in our objectives we need to work together as a team. Our success depends on every member of our skilled and dedicated workforce supporting what we set out to do, trusting one another, feeling valued and adapting to changing circumstances. Above all we must all feel strong enough to be supportive to patients who are struggling with life.

We aim for a culture of open communication and individual responsibility for seeking better ways of doing things. We encourage a climate that provides challenge, recognition of effort and success, and the opportunity for personal growth.

We will

- run the leanest possible management structure
- maximize delegation of authority and responsibility
- recognize and reward individual achievement
- provide quality training for staff
- actively develop staff careers by promotion within the practice where possible
- have a sound appraisal system and manage staff performance effectively.

IN THE LONGER TERM

Health care is changing fast, yet there are core qualities that are constant: compassionate caring, going the extra mile for the sake of someone who is suffering, understanding the unchanging needs of human beings. We must also seek to transcend the tendency for healthcare professions to hold a narrow view of suffering and how to meet it. This requires us to continue to extend the boundaries of our thinking and exploration, and to work with others who think differently to ourselves.

However, to adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected events and fluctuating political imperatives, our infrastructure and attitudes must be flexible so that we have the agility to meet the next challenge. We must also provide premises from which to work that reflect our values, further our objectives, and most importantly, foster health and enthusiasm.

Written by Dr William House, August 2007